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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

Summary: Reports on national political subjects continued to dominate front pages in all newspapers on Thursday. The English language newspaper "The News" and its sister Urdu publication, "Jang," highlighted Interior Minister Malik's remarks, made in an exclusive interview, that the "issue of hiring out 200 houses to Americans is being probed." U.S. Admiral Mullen's remarks that "if U.S. citizens are attacked, and there's reliable information it originated in Pakistan, the United States will respond" received prominent display in several major newspapers. Ambassador Patterson's Swat visit and her meeting with local officials to discuss the rehabilitation of IDPs also garnered media coverage. Some Urdu language newspapers ran Foreign Minister Qureshi's remarks refuting the establishment of a 'mini Pentagon' in Islamabad, as alleged by a religious political leader. Most major dailies also highlighted an official denial of an incident in which four school children were reportedly killed by Taliban militants.

Editorializing the brutal killing of four schoolchildren in Orakzai Agency by Taliban militants, the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn," noted that "forced on to the back foot in the theater of war, the militants could try to blur the focus of the state by creating new law and order situations." However, the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," observed that the "tragic shooting in Orakzai is a direct outcome of the failure to tackle problems when they occur, allowing them to grow terrifyingly in proportion." Commenting on the recent drone strike, the pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam," wrote: "The criminal silence of our government and the political leadership at large on the killing of innocent and fasting people in North Waziristan, by the U.S. drone attacks, is spreading despondency in the entire Pakistani nation particularly the young people." End Summary.

News Stories

"U.S. To Respond If Attacked From Pakistan: Mullen; Islamabad Tops Washington's Priority List: Gates" "The Nation," "The Post" (09/10)

"Of all the challenges and potential problems the United States faces, Pakistan tops the priority list, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Tuesday. 'Pakistan faces a lot of problems right now,' he said during an interview on PBS.... The Pakistani government also understands that if U.S. citizens are attacked, and there's reliable information it originated in Pakistan, the United States will respond, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who also was on the program, said."

"U.S. Checks Up On Pak Military" "The Nation," "Daily Times"
(09/10)

"As part of the U.S. monitoring of Pakistan's military, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, visited the militancy-hit Swat Valley on Wednesday and monitored the effectiveness of military operation 'Rah-e-Rast' by taking an aerial view through helicopter. Patterson also visited the Government Girls High School, Saidu Sharif, and met students there. The U.S. Ambassador was also briefed by the military official about the ongoing military operation."

"Pakistan Facing Unprecedented Challenges: U.S." "Dawn" (09/10)

"A senior U.S. official described Pakistan on Wednesday as a country which faced unprecedented challenges and was of utmost strategic interest. 'Pakistan, it is difficult to imagine a country of such strategic importance - and a key ally of the United States - that faces a more daunting set of problems,' said Assistant Secretary Robert O. Blake. Outlining the Obama administration's policy for South Asia, Mr. Blake told a gathering at Washington's Johns Hopkins University that the United States wanted to help Pakistan overcome the challenges it was facing."

"U.S. Citizens Advised To Restrict Movement" "Pakistan Observer"
(09/10)

"The U.S. has asked its citizens and senior officers living in Pakistan to restrict their movement due to security reason ahead of 9/11 anniversary, sources said."

"U.S. Report Hails Pak Steps For Security Of Nuclear Arsenal" "The News" (09/10)

"Pakistan has in recent years taken a number of steps to increase international confidence in the security of its nuclear arsenal, according to an updated U.S. Congressional Research Service report."

"I think Osama's dead: Zardari" "Daily Times" (09/10)

"President Asif Ali Zardari says it seems as if Al Qaeda Chief Usama Bin Laden is no longer alive, reported BBC on Wednesday. Talking to the BBC World Service in Islamabad to mark his first year in office as President, Zardari said democracy was functioning in Pakistan, and the government was fighting militants with determination."

"Pakistan Can Cope With India's N-Test, Says Qureshi" "Dawn"
(09/10)

"Pakistan is capable of protecting its interests if India carries out nuclear tests, says Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi. He was talking to reporters at the Foreign Office in Islamabad on Wednesday evening. When asked how Pakistan would respond if India carried out nuclear tests, Mr. Qureshi said: 'We will analyze the situation and follow a policy that suits our interests.'"

"Stolen NATO Devices Recovered" "Dawn" (09/10)

"Hundreds of wireless sets stolen from NATO supply containers were seized during a raid on a warehouse in Quetta, the Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Dr. Farrukh, said on Wednesday. He said three people had been arrested. 'Apart from wireless sets, the seized items include spare parts of wireless sets, computers and x-ray machines,' Dr. Farrukh said."

"15 Militants Killed In Swat" "Dawn" (09/10)

"Fifteen miscreants were killed during a search-and-cordon operation in Swat on Wednesday, the military said in a statement. A large cache of arms, ammunition and explosives was seized during raids, it said. According to the ISPR, 19 militants surrendered in Sarsenai, Shah Dhand Banda, Bar Shor, Galoch and Kala Kalley."

"Shelling Forces People to Flee Area" "The News" (09/10)

"More people migrated to safer places and neighboring Afghanistan as

sporadic shelling by security forces on suspected hideouts of militants in the remote border areas in Baizai tehsil of Mohmand Agency continued for the second day on Wednesday."

"Killing of Schoolchildren by Taliban Refuted: FATA Secretariat"
"Jang" (09/10)

"The media cell of the FATA Secretariat has rejected a report, published in various newspapers, that the Taliban have killed or injured some schoolchildren and termed it completely baseless. It may be some mischief of some anti-social elements, it said."

"3 More Houses Demolished As Bara Operation continues" "The News" (09/10)

"Three houses of tribesmen were demolished by the security forces as the operation against militants continued in Bara subdivision of Khyber Agency for the ninth consecutive day on Wednesday."

"Militant Killed, Three Bodies Found" "The News" (09/10)

"Three bodies of militants were found and another killed by Quami Lashkar at a check-post in Anjani area of Orakzai Agency Wednesday, tribal sources said."

"Drones Fly Over Orakzai" "The News" (09/10)

"Three U.S. drones flew over various parts of Orakzai Agency on Wednesday, eyewitness said. Fear spread among the local residents to an extent that they did not proceed to the mosques for prayers to avoid any attack by the drones."

"No Mini Pentagon Being Built In Islamabad: FM Qureshi" "Aaj Kal" (09/10)

"... Commenting on the JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's remarks regarding the establishment of a 'mini Pentagon' in Islamabad, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi maintained that there is no truth in such reports regarding the establishment of a 'mini Pentagon' in Islamabad, nor Pakistan can permit any such plan. Mr. Qureshi made it clear that China also didn't express any concern on this issue (expansion of U.S. Embassy) either. Addressing an Iftar Dinner in honor of the media men at the Foreign Office in Islamabad, he said that no American official is coming to Pakistan without valid visa. The Americans are acquiring a piece of land for the expansion of their diplomatic mission, but they will have to go to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) for this purpose, the Foreign Minister added."

"Issue Of Hiring Out 200 Houses to Americans Being Probed: Malik"
"The News" (09/10)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Wednesday said that he had issued a directive that no foreigner should be given a house without prior permission from the area police and district administration. The security czar was responding to a question that foreigners, especially American nationals, have hired 200 houses in Islamabad. In a panel interview with 'The News' and daily 'Jang,' Rehman Malik said that he has asked the administration to hold an inquiry regarding the issue."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Orakzai Outrage," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/10)

"Tuesday's tragedy in Orakzai offered further proof, as if any were needed, of the inherent barbarity that defines the Taliban. They do not subscribe to the norms of civilized people and view Pakistani culture in its myriad forms with contempt and loathing. Four boys, all of them reportedly under the age of 16, were on their way to school on Tuesday when they were shot dead by the Taliban.... What was their crime, how could the Taliban possibly view them as a threat?... Such gruesome acts involving the targeting of civilians may be replicated if the Taliban continue to be pounded in their hideouts and on the battlefield. Forced on to the back foot in the

theatre of war, the militants could try to blur the focus of the state by creating new law and order situations. Terrorizing the people of Pakistan, who are now thoroughly behind the military operation, may be another objective. The biggest fear though is that the Taliban could try to stoke sectarian unrest to open a new front and take the pressure off themselves."

"Death At School," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/10)

"Four schoolboys were killed and several others injured when gunmen opened fire on them near their school.... The attack, carried out according to eyewitnesses by Taliban militants, is believed to be sectarian in nature. The boys targeted were all Shia.... The indications of an expansion in sectarian violence across the tribal areas are alarming. The Kurram Agency has already been ravaged by it.... The tragic shooting in Orakzai is a direct outcome of the failure to tackle problems when they occur, allowing them to grow terrifyingly in proportion.... A strategy which can rid people of the terror they inflict must be worked out."

"Why Government And Political Leadership Silent On Drone Attacks?," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (10/09)

"The criminal silence of our government and the political leadership at large on the killing of innocent and fasting people in North Waziristan by U.S. drone attacks is spreading despondency throughout the nation, particularly among the young people. Ironically, the attitude of religious political parties, having countrywide popular support, regarding the massacre of innocent Pakistanis, including children, on a daily-basis is no different from that of the secular political parties. The U.S. government will not review its drone policy unless our religious and political parties launch a unified, vigorous and countrywide popular movement to protest these attacks which are depriving Pakistan of its sovereignty."

"Drone Attacks: 59 Deaths In 2 Days," an editorial note in the second largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/10)

"The Taliban had announced a unilateral ceasefire, but bloodshed continues as the other side did not respond in a positive manner.... Both sides should announce a ceasefire out of respect for Ramazan. They should resolve their issues at the table, because if they do so, it would send a signal to NATO and the U.S. that Pakistan stands united and there will then be no need to carry out drone attacks."

"Predator Attacks," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/10)

"The pity is that these (drone) attacks kill a large number of civilians and lead to a severe backlash swelling up the ranks of militants.... Since the missile strikes have proven to be highly counter-productive, an alternative that discourages the use of force must be found to restore calm and normalcy along the tribal belt. One must never forget that it is a struggle in which winning hearts and minds can make the crucial difference. To combat the militant culture in the real sense of the term, the root causes of terrorism - poverty, ignorance and lack education - would have to be addressed."

"U.S. Blows Hot And Cold On Pak Nukes," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (09/10)

"There are many reasons for launching propaganda against Pakistan's strategic assets and some of them are aimed at seeking information about the security system, location, state of their readiness and to build international opinion that the country cannot ensure the security of its nukes. However the U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates in an interview has expressed satisfaction with the security arrangements at Pakistan's nuclear arsenal saying that as per their assessment the security arrangements are sufficient and adequate. We are thankful to Secretary Gates for giving a clean chit to Pakistan on nuclear security issue.... However we expect that the intelligence agencies of the U.S. would keep the words of their Defence Secretary in mind in future while disclosing their

assessment to the media about security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal."

"U.S. Shifts Into Positive Gear on Pakistan's Anti-Terror Successes," an op-ed by Murtaza Mohsin in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/10)

"U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the Pakistani government has performed admirably ... in terms of the effort to take on these extremists in the NWFP and FATA.... It appears that with forceful action against terrorists, Pakistan can win back some of the U.S. public opinion in its favor. But it is too early at this stage to build on these positive statements as signals of a significant shift in U.S. policy on Pakistan and Afghanistan. What they signify is an encouragement from the U.S. leadership of Pakistan's strong-handed approach towards fighting Taliban/terrorists.... So the recent positive tenor in U.S. statements is a welcome development."

"Possible Change In U.S. Policy," an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/10)

"For one, we can expect fresh calls for more vigorous and expanded operations against the militants, notwithstanding the current praise for the Swat mission. Others' initiatives to ratchet up pressure, including allegations of Pakistan's tampering with U.S. supplied weapons are likely to become more frequent. Secondly, there will be greater demand for transparency and accountability as regards aid for Pakistan. Some evidence of this can already be gleaned from the many conditions being attached to aid for Pakistan.... Moreover, the (U.S.) administration has announced that most of its assistance to Pakistan would be spent on projects to be handled by U.S. agencies. This will greatly circumscribe the freedom with which U.S. aid money has been used in the past by authoritarian regimes. All this means that it is incumbent on our leadership to begin an urgent review of our national policies, based on the assumption that the countdown for U.S. disengagement in Afghanistan has begun, notwithstanding the administration's protestations to the contrary."

"Strong Nation And Feeble Leadership," an op-ed by Hamid Mir in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (09/10)

"You might have remembered that an advisor to the U.S. Army David Kilcullen had claimed in March 2009 that Pakistan could be disintegrated in the next six month. Following this prediction, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a statement that the Taliban could capture Islamabad. These were the days when the United States was very annoyed over the peace deal between the Awami National Party (ANP) and Maulana Sufi Mohammad, and a media campaign was unleashed by the American newspapers against Pakistan. Neither the federal government nor the Taliban was serious about making the peace deal successful. At last, the peace deal failed and a military operation was launched in Swat. During the operation, the U.S. made utmost efforts to get permission from the Government of Pakistan for its (U.S.) troops to enter into the Pakistani tribal areas, but it didn't happen owing to hostile Pakistani public opinion. More or less three million people were displaced because of this military operation. The Taliban were not eliminated, nor was their leadership nabbed. Six months have passed since Mr. David Kilcullen's prediction, but by the grace of God Pakistan is intact and undamaged. The claim of the U.S. military advisor proved false.

The Taliban were not able to reach Islamabad, however Americans have hired two hundred houses in Islamabad. The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad claims that these houses have been hired for its new staffers. But the residents of Islamabad think that these houses will be used for the commandos of the American private security agency Blackwater. Prime Minister Gilani says that Blackwater does not exist in Pakistan. Perhaps he (PM Gilani) is right, as according to a New York Times report, Blackwater has renamed itself in Pakistan. I personally invite Prime Minister Gilani to make a surprise visit to the sectors of F-6, F-7 and F-8 of Islamabad, and inquire from the local residents whether they feel secure (in the presence of Americans or Blackwater) here. Most of them will definitely tell PM Gilani that they are not afraid of the Taliban rather they feel threatened due to mysterious activities of Americans around them. The same atmosphere prevails in Peshawar.

If we look into this matter more closely, we will find that there was propaganda that Taliban would capture Islamabad and Peshawar. On the contrary, mysterious Americans are quite visible in these cities at present. It will not be wrong to say that the motive behind David Kilcullen's declaration was to make the Pakistanis panic so that they would call the U.S. Army for their rescue, but when nothing happened, retired soldiers are being sent to Pakistan silently who work for a private security agency."

"Ugly Reality Of 'War On Terrorism,'" an op-ed by Huzaima Bukhari and Dr. Ikramul Haq in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (09/10)

"Eight years after the wanton attack on New York's twin towers - masterly planned and executed to create a pretext to invade Afghanistan - majority believes that the United States and its allies have pushed the world into a frenzied quagmire. The perpetuation of terrorism since 2001 - coupled with mishandling of the entire issue by U.S. and its allies - has been posing serious threat to international peace. In the name of fighting terrorism, so-called proponents of 'peace,' 'democracy' and champions of human rights are colonizing oil and mineral rich countries, conspiring to topple some 'unwanted' governments and lending support to drug trade and mass acceptance of fascism in the name of reforming the world."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson